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Hace notar el señor Espinosa que no siempre ha conservado estrictamente reproducido el lenguaje en que venían redactados los cuentos, en vista del hibridismo "ni popular ni literario" de los manuscritos. Con todo, encuentro que, en la gran mayoría de lo colectado, la expresión se aviene al uso general del lenguaje vulgar en gran parte de la costa mejicana del Pacífico. Sitios sin embargo he conocido allí, en que es sorprendente la corrección y sabor a siglo XVI con que ha perdurado el idioma de los conquistadores, con reiterados arcaísmos de sentido y de forma, y sin más alteración perceptible que los cambios fonéticos y la mezcla de vocablos indígenas. Entre las clases iletradas y humildes, la corrupción de la lengua sin duda ha sido mayor en las ciudades más populosas que en los campos, acaso porque, en éstos, pobres y acomodados vivían menos desunidos por las categorías sociales, pudiendo así el indio mantener trato y relación directos con la gente culta.

Por esto me inclino a pensar que el señor Espinosa, aun retocando más de lo que pueda haberlo hecho los manuscritos colectados como folklore de Oajaca, aun corrigiendo yerros y llenando omisiones, no se habría apartado mucho de la forma popular más corriente. Así aproximadamente lo practiqué yo alguna vez, por falta de otro arbitrio. Cuando traduje al castellano el "Unknown Mexico" de Lumholtz ("El México Desconocido," Nueva York, 1904), intentaba yo reproducir el texto exacto de los cuentos y leyendas contenidos en dicha obra; pero desgraciadamente el autor no había conservado los originales. En vista de ello, hice la versión imitando giros y locuciones del lenguaje popular más correcto, lejos de bajarlos al nivel del habla vulgar de los centros urbanos. Y no de otro modo se ha procedido en todos los tiempos, pues la misma *Ilíada*, que no es, en suma, sino un producto folklórico, recibió de manos de sus colectores ajuste y pulimento que a los pósteros no se nos ocurre lamentar.

Si lo que se busca en estas recolecciones es folklore y no barbarismos y otros defectos gramaticales, quizás hasta convendría adoptar dicha práctica, sobre todo para las narraciones en prosa, que siempre divergen y se amplían, adulteran o modifican según la memoria y aptitudes del narrador. Sólo las versificadas son de estructura más resistente. Por ello sería deseable que, como lo ha hecho el señor Boas con varios cantos, también de Oajaca, los coleccionadores de folklore mexicano encaminaran su preferencia por esa senda. Encontrarían minas casi inexploradas y, en ellas, metales de mejor ley.

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Norsk Folkeminnesamlarar II, 1. OLEA CRØGER ved H. G. HEGGTVEIT og RIKARD BERGE. Risør, 1918. 75 p.

Four years ago, when the first issue of "Norsk folke-kultur" appeared, the editor mentioned a plan of also issuing booklets dealing with the history of the collecting of Norwegian folk-tales and ballads, to be accompanied by biographies of the collectors. The number before us is published as the first in this special series. Olea Crøger occupies a foremost place among the collectors of folk-tales in Norway in the thirties and forties of the last century. Her work has several times been spoken of by other writers (see,

for instance, "Nordmænd i det nittende aarhundrede," 2 : 201-203); but these accounts are all rather fragmentary, and we are glad to have now this fuller study of the method of her work and of what she accomplished.

Olea Crøger was of royal descent, her ancestry going back on her father's side to Haakon V, through Inger Ottesdotter Rømer til Austraa. On her mother's side she was of Danish descent, being descended from Johannes Nissen Crøger, pastor at Aastrup near Haderslev (Haderleben) in North Slesvig, 1537-59. Olea Styhr Crøger was born in Hitterdal, in eastern Telemarken, in 1801. She is spoken of by all those of her time who knew her as a remarkable and unusually gifted woman. Trained in music, she also became interested in ballad-music, and through these in the ballads themselves. It was owing to her in considerable measure that the melodies of a large number of popular ballads were rescued from oblivion. From the beginning of the early thirties she also made extensive collections of the ballads among the peasants of Upper Telemarken, — a region in which the ballad was still the common property of everybody. Her collection was published by M. B. Landstad, in connection with his own collections, in "Norske Folkeviser," printed in 1853. Berge gives an interesting account of her method of securing the ballads, of her relations to other collectors, of Jørgen Moe's hesitation to give up the editorial rights after she had once offered to sell him her collection, and, finally, of her collaboration with Landstad during the forties. There are five of Olea Crøger's ballads printed with the study (pp. 46-62), and other valuable material.

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ADOLF TAYLOR STARCK. *Der Alraun; Ein Beitrag zur Pflanzensagenkunde* (Ottendorfer Memorial Series of Germanic Monographs, No. 14). Baltimore, 1917. viii + 85 p.

THIS investigation of the mandrake belief is a welcome addition to the literature of a rather neglected field, the study of plant-lore. The mandrake is a fabulous plant, which, according to the fully-developed legend, springs from an effusion from a thief's body, and is found growing under the gallows on which he has been hanged. When a mandrake is pulled out of the ground, it utters so terrible a shriek, that any one who hears the cry dies; but if one loosens the earth about the plant, so that it is attached to the soil only by small fibres, and then ties it with a string to a black dog, the dog, in pursuing a bit of bread or meat, will jerk the root from the ground. In this way one can obtain it without danger to one's self, although at the expense of the dog. Properly cared for, the root will be of great advantage to the possessor: it can forecast future events, disclose secrets, make friends for its owner, keep him from poverty, and, if he is childless, give him children. If one lays a coin away with it over night, one will find two pieces of money in the morning; but do not select too large a coin, lest the vitality of the root be diminished. In the event of the owner's death, the mandrake passes to his youngest son, who should cause a bit of bread and a coin to be laid in the coffin. The eldest son inherits it if his brother has died. Such briefly is the legend of the mandrake, an *ungeheures Mischprodukt*, as Dr. Starck calls it, of accretions from the most varied sources.

Dr. Starck has traced the origin of the older and more stable traits in